7:Tauxier—1 G-5 (1913-1916) 1917 FA28 Mossi FA28

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The Black Population of Yatenga
/Le Noir du Yatenga/

(Book IV. The Family)

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Paris: 1917
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Human Relations Area Files
1959

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BOOK IV

The Family

596 We shall divide this study of the family among the Mossi of Yatenga into several subdivisions.

1. Generalities on the family.
2. Groupings larger than the single household.
3. Women and the household.
4. Children and education.
5. Apendages of the family.
6. Family property.
7. Transmission of family property or inheritance.

First, let us look at the generalities which include in turn the following subdivisions.

1. The composition of the family.
2. Its name.
3. Its nature.
4. Examples.

The Mossi family of Yatenga is one of several layers, if I can thus describe it. First, one may consider the total family, the family in its fullest extension, which usually includes from 100 to 150 persons and several separate compounds. The compounds themselves usually [592] include several households. Each compound does not form a tight economic entity, as many other Sudanese compounds do. On the [571] contrary, it is divided into two or more work groups according to its numerical size. Finally, below the work group there is the single household (father, mother or mothers, and unmarried children). We shall examine these groupings one by one.

Name. —The family in its fullest extension, the total family, is called boudou in Yatenga Mossi. The compound is called zaka. The word iri, used especially by the Mossi of Ouagadougou, is also employed, while the word zaka is used chiefly in Yatenga. Finally, [571] there is no word to designate the household, nor is there a word to designate the work group. One says: "the people of So-and-So (the name of the head of the group)." /224/

Nature of the family. —In the first place, the family is communal up to a certain point. The whole family does not work together nor

596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

[611] As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

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Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
1st family	1	51
2nd family	6	132
3rd family	2	23
4th family	6	160
5th family	3	59
6th family	5	50
/225/ 7th family	9	136
8th family	3	79
9th family	8	242
10th family	4	158
11th family	4	151
	51	1, 241

592 This gives us an average of 113 persons per family, 6 compounds
596 per family, and 24 persons per compound.
162 Now, here are the villages in the little canton of Lako or Lago.
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Villages	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Bô	2	3	89
Boulounsi	1	3	137
Ninga	2	12	146
Piga-Sorodé	1	2	35
Réga	4	17	484
Viré-Sorodé	3	4	242
Diogoré	1	8	352
Lako	7	25	1, 457
Touba	3	3	216
Nango-Yarsé (Mossi of the village)	1	1	7
Totals	25	78	3, 165

592 This gives us an average of 126 or 127 persons per family, 3 com-
596 pounds per family, and 40 or 41 people per compound.
162 Now, here are some other statistics.
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Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Number of Persons
Lougouri	2	4	48	157
Oula	2	5	43	149
Réka	1	2	3	46
Noungou	2	14	46	233
Zíré	1	3	36	197
Kindiba	7	35	149	736
Diessiré	5	15	49	286
Bissigaï	4	17	100	510
Bougounam	8	32	151	999
Totals	32	127	625	3, 313

/226/ On an average, this gives us 103 or 104 persons per family, 26 persons per compound, 5 persons per household, 4 compounds or soukala per family.

Here are some statistics collected in the canton of Koussouka and covering those villages which are entirely Mossi as well as those which are predominantly Mossi.

Villages	Families	Compounds	Households	Population
Rondo	7	72	148	975
Bouga-Mossi	1	11	23	152
Sékéba	1	9	28	183
Zandoma	3	24	62	344
Tangué	7	26	67	439
Konga-Mossi	3	23	72	483
Iroum	2	63	159	880
Totals	24	228	559	3, 456

592 Here we get an average of 144 persons per family, 15 persons per
596 compound, and 6 persons per household. This gives 2 or 3 households
162 per compound and 9 to 10 compounds per family.
261 Finally, here are some figures obtained among the Mossi in the northern part of the /Ouahigouya/ circle /a circle is an administrative district/.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound	Observations
Boulzoma	1	39 (1)	39	(1) 7 households
Aoréma	50	672	13	
Bogoya	29	379 (2)	13	(2) 64 households
Yabonsoro	37	494 (3)	13	(3) 74 households
Bagayaloro	14	290	21	
Barélogo	17	317	19	
Lilligondé	12	177	15	
Rikou	33	486	15	
Dinghiri	59	725	12	
Dinghila	44	362	8	
Irigué	17	94	6	
Bahn (Mossi)	3	54	18	
Pogoro	38	334	8	
Ninighé	7	75	11	
Séghé	8	111	14	
Tibo	19	228	12	
Totals	388	4, 837	12 to 13	

Here we have only 12 or 13 persons per compound (and 6 per household). This shows an evolution of the Mossi family of Yatenga toward /227/ a more disintegrated form, which we shall discuss later when we mention the exceptions.

If we summarize the preceding statistics, we obtain the following table.

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Locations	Families	Compounds	Persons
Diogoré, etc.	43	179	5, 248
Oula, etc.	32	127	3, 313
Koussouka	24	228	3, 456
Northern part	?	369	4, 609
	?	903	16, 626

This gives us on an average 18 to 19 persons per compound and 121 persons per family (1).

1. This figure of 18 to 19 persons is an average one. Actually, there are some Mossi compounds which contain only 3 persons and others which boast as many as 100. To give a better idea of the matter, I shall provide below a numerical breakdown of the village of Diessiré (canton of Léba) where there are 286 persons and 15 compounds, or an average of 19 persons per compound. In reality, no one compound holds exactly 19 people.

Compounds	Households	Persons
First compound	4	24
Second compound	3	18
Third compound	1	6
Fourth compound	2	11
Fifth compound	4	23
Sixth compound	3	17
Seventh compound	1	5
Eighth compound	2	12
Ninth compound	2	12
Tenth compound	1	6
Eleventh compound	2	12
Twelfth compound	14	81
Thirteenth compound	3	18

Fourteenth compound	6	36
Fifteenth compound	1	5
	49	286

This gives us, therefore:

Compounds with several households (more than two).. 7
Compounds with several households (two) 4
Compounds with a single household 4

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Now that these statistics have been listed, let us examine in detail the groupings larger than the single household, which may be categorized as follows: (1) the total family; (2) the compound; (3) the work group.

The total family. —As we stated earlier, the total family /228/ does not occupy one and the same compound. It is divided into a number of zaka or iri of varying size (the average number given by the above statistics is five). One of these compounds is that of the boudoukasaman or head of the family, who governs the whole family and is at the same time the head of his own zaka and head of his work group. As head of the family, he holds definitively only three types of powers: (1) religious powers; (2) judicial powers; (3) the right to give the daughters of the whole family in marriage.

As head of the family, he has no economic powers.

We shall study the religious powers of the boudoukasaman in detail under "Religion (Sacerdotal Organization)" /not translated/. Let us simply state here that although the head of the total family holds the highest religious powers, the zakasoba or heads of compounds are not totally deprived of them, and this contributes to the greater autonomy of these subfamilies.

I am borrowing the following particulars on the family head and the family council which assists him from Vadier's excellent monograph, here and there correcting some inexact details.

"The head of the family, or patriarch, " says Vadier, "is the oldest member of the family. It is he who is the head of it.

"He enjoys great authority over all family members, but exclusively in regard to personal matters. To him alone, after obtaining the consent of the fathers, belongs the right to give the young girls of the

596 family in marriage. Likewise, the head of the family, assisted by the family council, settles all the little differences which arise between relatives. He also intervenes when a father fails to secure the obedience of one of his children or cannot manage to discipline him.

"It is he alone who must sacrifice animals for the benefit of the whole family when his relatives bring them to him on the occasion of family feasts.

"All the members of the family owe obedience to the family head. Likewise, they must show him the greatest respect.

"When the family elder dies, his younger brother becomes head of the family. When all his brothers have successively held this office, the eldest son of the eldest brother becomes the family head after the brothers, etc.

"Sometimes the head of the family does not live in the same village as the rest of the family. He may very well live with some of his sons or brothers, away from his other relatives, but his powers remain unchanged.

"In addition to the family head, there is the family council which is made up of all the men and old women of the family. This body has no well-defined role. It meets under the leadership of the family head to settle all matters concerning the family. The council would decide, for example, as to whether an incorrigible child should be sent to a naba /ruler/, as to who should intervene /229/ in case of a quarrel over an inheritance, who should seize the goods of a spendthrift in order to dole them out to him in proportion to his needs, etc."

592 351 The compound. —The Mossi compound consists of a certain number of round earthen huts or cabins surmounted by thatched roofs and huts for millet, all crowded into a rather narrow space cut by passages, hallways, small courtyards, etc. This complex is surrounded by a moderately high earth wall (two meters) which encircles the huts or cabins and encloses the compound.

592 361 The compounds are scattered over the plain, 50 or 100 meters apart. Some are larger than others: some have 15 or 20 huts or even more; others have but four or five (2).

192 2. To designate these compounds, the word soukala or sokala is often used. This word is hallowed by custom in Yatenga, in the Ouagadougou area, in the Léo area, etc., in short, in all Mossi lands and their

192 dependencies, as well as in the language of the European officials who inhabit the territory. Actually, the word sokala is not Mossi but Mandé /Mande/. In Bambara the hut is called so, in Malinké /Malinke/ sou. Soukala or sokala means exactly "the walls of the hut" (from kala, which means "bone" and by extension all elongated things, walls among them, and from so or sou, whose meaning we have learned already). This word was brought here from the shores of the Niger at the time of conquest. It is to some extent equivocal, for although it is usually given the meaning of "compound," some Europeans also use it to designate a whole quarter /a village subdivision including several compounds/. This is the meaning given to it by Delafosse (Le Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal-Niger/, Vol. 3, p. 126). As for myself, I always gave it the meaning of "compound" in my Noir du Soudan, that is to say, the meaning which I gave to the term carré or carrée in my monograph on the Noir de Guinée /The Black Population of (French) Guinea/. This word, however, and analogous words which are not strictly native to the region or whose French meaning is not absolutely clear lead to some confusion. We shall return to this subject later.

592 Let us add that the head of the compound is called zakasoba or irisoba (from zaka or iri, "compound," and soba, "chief, master"). Vadier incorrectly designated the head of the total family as zakasoba [596] in his monograph. The head of the total family is the boudoukasaman. The zakasoba is the head of a compound, of a home, of that cluster of huts and millet granaries encircled by a red wall which makes such a distinct and isolated unit on the Mossi plains.

This compound accommodates varying numbers of people, 18 or 19 being the average (with exceptions), as we have seen above.

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 182 571 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 571 241 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 264 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions.—We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
571 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

145 The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

143 In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household,
182 which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and
592 with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.
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Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Bargo	77	8	10
Lo	127	14	9
Rakoéga-Tenga	33	4	8
Moro-Koquin	37	7	5
Dougouré	41	7	6
Bama	82	7	12
Kora	99	9	11
Tangué	110	14	8
Minima	113	12	9
Kanion	76	10	7
Toukoulounga	124	4	31
Tempelra	35	6	6
Bauda	162	5	32
Kargo-Mossi	181	22	8
	4, 637	458	10

The same applies to the Mossi of the canton of Tougo, located south-southeast of Yatenga. Here are the figures concerning the number of compounds and the number of people in the canton.

Villages	Compounds	Persons	Average per Compound
Tibtenga	9	102	11
Béma	96	792	8
Ouembatenga	9	76	8
Rima	63	347	5 to 6
Tougo	69	937	13 to 14
Lébenga	4	40	10
Danaoua	22	229	10
Rasoumdé	27	189	7
Mangoulouma	2	28	14
Rikéba	52	545	10 to 11
Totals	353	3, 285	9 to 10

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household. —We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

000 12. Women's property.
13. Adultery.
14. Divorce.
15. Formalities of divorce.
16. Consequences of divorce. /235/
17. Psychology of women. The woman as lover and mother.

584 First, let us study the promise of marriage.

Promise of marriage. —"It is customary," says Vadier, "for a father to present his son with a first wife. It is the father who takes the first steps and offers the first required gifts. If the son is at least 17 or 18 years old, however, or if he is already married, he fulfills the necessary obligations himself.

"In practice the son always consults his father and marries a woman he has chosen only after he has obtained paternal consent. In theory, the consent of the father is not necessary to validate the marriage. If the son fails to obtain his father's permission, however, the latter drives him out of his soukala (compound), but the marriage nevertheless goes fully into effect.

"The marriage proposal is made without consideration of the girl's age. She is usually six or seven years old when she is asked for, but it frequently happens that she is still at her mother's breast when she is promised to a man. We can see, therefore, that a long period of time inevitably elapses between the marriage proposal and the marriage itself.

"Let us study first those formalities which attend a marriage proposal.

"The Mossi who has an eye on a young girl, either for himself or for his son, pays a visit to the head of the child's family and, according to his means, offers him a gift of a chicken, a mat, a small amount of salt, or merely a bundle of firewood. He makes known to him the object of his visit, taking great care not to mention the name of the young girl he wants. Regarding this, he was careful previously to send a mutual friend to the head of the family, to notify him of the approaching visit and to point out the name of the girl who would be asked for. The head of the family, if he does not wish to comply with this request, declares that he has no daughter to give in marriage. On the other hand, if he agrees, he tells the suitor to return at a later date, which he sets and at which time he will pledge the young girl to him. The suitor returns on the appointed day with several friends

584 bearing dolo /millet beer/; they will serve as witnesses. In their presence, the head of the family mentions by name to the suitor the girl he is granting to him and who will be delivered to him as a wife later when she is old enough to take a husband.

"Then the betrothed man with the friends he brought goes to visit every soukala head in the village, greets them in accordance with Mossi custom, and announces to them that such-and-such a family head has promised him a young girl in marriage. The whole village is thus made witnesses."

Persons whose consent is required to validate a promise of marriage.

[562] —"The consent of the young girl," says Vadier, "is by no means required. In fact, she is disposed of without being consulted, and she is always forced to become the wife of the man to whom she has been promised, except if her future husband is a leper or blind. The /236/ young girl is actually supposed to be unacquainted with the name of her prospective husband until she is taken to him.

"To validate the marriage, the following people must express their consent.

"1. The future husband. His consent follows from the transactions undertaken by his father or by himself with the family of his future wife.

"2. The girl's father. When a Mossi has one or several daughters and when he thinks the moment has come for the head of the family to dispose of them, he tells the latter that he can promise them in marriage. In spite of his powers, the head of the family could not betroth a young girl unless her father had told him that he could give her in marriage.

"When he has chosen a husband, he goes to see the father of the girl and makes known to him the offer he has received. The father can accept or refuse as he sees fit. His consent is absolutely indispensable, and the head of the family cannot ignore it.

"The father cannot dispose of his daughter without the consent of the family head, except in circumstances we shall examine later.

584 596 "3. The head of the family. The consent of the head of the family is inevitably required, since it is he alone who has the power to promise the young girls of his family in marriage under the terms described above. Three cases where the consent of the family head is not indispensable are as follows: (1) when the father of the young girl is at odds with the head of the family, the father alone may dispose of his

584 596 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts, will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household, [603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 583 [171] Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe, the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
586 contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé /Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

431 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence
583 (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his
[431 future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him
273] a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two
431 gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one
[431] of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

[782] The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

[252] On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

582 the household a more serious and more binding affair among the
836 Bambara than in this particular region. /241/

Vadier says on the subject, "The fact that a young girl has had relations with a native other than her husband prior to marriage is by no means an impediment to the marriage.

"Many betrothed girls have lovers. It even happens quite frequently that their fathers are forced to go in search of them at the homes of the young men with whom they have run away. Actually, this matter is of no concern to the husband. As long as he gets the woman, the rest matters little to him. It is not unusual for a girl to bring a child
[848] which she had by another man into her husband's home. This child eventually returns to its natural father."

582 This picture is painted in rather bleak colors. In reality, fathers
836 and mothers do try, as best they can, to prevent their daughters from
585 taking lovers. They do not like to see them go to the "tom-tom," but they can scarcely keep them from going, and often the "tom-tom,"
626 like our own country dances, plays havoc with a young girl's virtue.
684 If the girl says nothing, everything goes well. Since among the Mossi there is no exhibition of the skirt cloth following the consummation of the marriage, there is no evidence. Even if the husband knows ahead of time or finds out at the last moment, he says nothing out of shame, to avoid being scorned. When the father leads his daughter to the hut of the ancestors before sending her to her fiancé, however, she often does not dare enter the hut. Having lost her virginity and fearing that she might be killed by the ancestors, she admits her wrongdoing to her father. Sometimes she may have the courage or the effrontery to enter the ancestral hut, but later, if she falls ill in her husband's hut, she will interpret her condition as the ancestors' vengeance for the sort of moral perjury she committed by entering their hut in a state of transgression, and she will confess to her husband what she has done. In both cases the lover is confronted, in the first instance by the father, in the second by the husband, and a goat, two canari of dolo, and a chicken are demanded from him. A sacrifice will be offered to the ancestors with these various items to ask their forgiveness, they will pardon the wife and the lover, and order will be restored.

848 Sometimes, as mentioned earlier, a child is the fruit of a girl's passion. The lover having made reparation and the ancestors being satisfied, the husband will accept the child along with the girl, but

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 171 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

684 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife.—The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 596 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

593 The wife must obey her husband. The latter has the right to strike
562 her in case of disobedience, adultery, etc. He cannot break one of her limbs, or kill her.

595 Polygamy. —Polygamy is the general rule, at least theoretically. That is to say, the Mossi may have as many spouses as he wishes as long as he can minister to their needs.

595 In actual fact, only rich people have several wives. The majority
589 are monogamous by necessity, and there are even bachelors. As a passing remark, this applies to the Sudanese Negroes in general, for everywhere nature creates approximately as many men as women, and it is hard to visualize how in any one region each man could have several wives. However, in spite of the occurrence of bachelors and a large number of truly monogamous people, the question still stands. It is solved if we bear in mind that girls are married much earlier than men. This results in a much larger number of women than men "in active service," if I may be permitted to say so. Undoubtedly, this (along with the occurrence of bachelors and a considerable number of monogamists), takes care of the objection which naturally arises when we speak of polygamy. /243/

163 It may be, let us add, that the number of girls born here is a little higher than that of boys, as has been noted in England, for example.

595 By way of figures on polygamy, let us state that the Moro Naba
643 Bango, the last one who reigned before the arrival of the French, had
645 about 80 wives. The Naba Koboga, who ruled from 1902 to 1914, had 30 or 40. The present Rassam Naba, one of the ministers of the Moro Naba, has 30 or 35 wives. These are, of course, exceptional figures if the total population of Yatenga is taken into account. In any case, the rich men, notables, and men in easy circumstances always have several wives.

595 Organization of the polygamous household. —"The first wife," says Vadier, "enjoys a certain authority over the others. It is she who transmits her husband's orders to the other wives and who notifies him of their wants, who supervises the preparation of meals and apportions the food. In addition, it is she who comes and tells the [844] husband that such-and-such a wife is no longer in a state of zim and can now fulfill her conjugal duties.

"Aside from this special prerogative enjoyed by the first wife, all wives have the same rights and duties. In principle, each wife must share in turn her husband's bed. Nevertheless, he is free to summon his favorite wife during the day."

462 Women's tasks.—First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. [252] They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. [256 412] This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

833 The conjugal duty. —The wife owes her husband the fulfillment of the conjugal duty.

The wife must never evade it except when she is unwell, pregnant, or when she is nursing. We can see, therefore, that among the Mossi in particular and among the Sudanese in general (for the same customs prevail in this area among all Sudanese Negroes) there is great tact-
[853] fulness. One appreciates this all the more if one bears in mind that here the women suckle their children for two or three years.

"If," says Vadier, "a woman should evade her husband from newly-wed shyness or from any other motive, he would first use all the means of persuasion at his command and, especially, beg the wife's relatives to speak to her. Should their exhortations prove vain, constraint
[573] would be used by giving the wife a beating or putting her in irons. Finally, should these measures fail to bring the spouse to compliance,
[586] she could be turned out by her husband.

"In return, the husband owes the wife the same conjugal duty which he has the right to demand from her.

"Should the husband fail to fulfill it because of impotence, sickness, or simply from ill will, the neglected wife would mention the matter to the family head's first wife, who would in turn notify him.

833 "Should the husband's behavior be caused by physical incapacity,
586 the wife would be taken from him and given to one of his brothers or, if there were none, to his closest male relative, but never to one of his sons. Should it be due merely to ill-feeling, a protest would be made, and should this fail to have any effect after several days, the wife would be allowed to return to her family." /245/

Let us state immediately that these contingencies almost never arise or are so rare as to be practically nonexistent. Custom anticipates them, however, and we have just described what happens when perchance they do arise.

562 Women's property. —Women may own individual property, as we
422 already know, goods which are not shared communally and which belong wholly to them. These goods come from various sources, sometimes the women's small plots of land, sometimes a surplus from the grain they are given to prepare food and which, once made into dolo, is sold for cowries. Sometimes also, the husband's munificence provides them with bracelets and other jewelry. Once given, this jewelry is wholly theirs, and if is added to the trinkets they procure with their own resources.

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery.—The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
565

684 Moro Naba or a member of the aristocracy. When one of his wives
643 deceived him, the Moro Naba had her killed along with her lover.
565 The guilty pair were strangled with cotton bands. Concerning the nakomsé /descendants of nabas/, the true nakomsé (for the descendants of Naba Rawa and Naba Yadega are no longer considered nakomsé at the present day and have reverted to the mass of the common people), the true nakomsé related to royalty since the time of Naba Nabacéré (1625-1655) and his descendants, Pigo (1720-1739) and Kango (1754-1787), when one of their wives had deceived them, they appealed first to the Basi Naba, head of the nakomsé, and presented the guilty pair to him. The Basi Naba sent them on to the Moro Naba, who had the woman and her lover strangled. The lover's property went to the Rassam Naba, chief of the people of Bingo who were in charge of the execution. The same procedure applied when the people of Bingo (house slaves of the Moro Naba) executed the wife of a Moro Naba and her lover. The property, which could not with decency revert to the deceived Moro Naba, went to the Rassam Naba, chief of Bingo.

837 Just as the wife owes faithfulness to her husband, the husband owes
684 faithfulness to his wife or wives. Violations of this rule are frequent, however, and the husband's escapades are far less important than those of the wife. In all events, the husband's infidelity never entails annulment of the marriage. Although the wives do not have the right to say much when their husband deceives them (provided he does not install his concubine in the conjugal household, and this in fact never happens), they do have two possibilities of revenge. The first is very rarely used by the Mossi women of Yatenga. It consists of notifying the husband of the woman with whom their husband is deceiving them. This results in more or less serious trouble for their husband. If their husband ventures to take into his hut for awhile a woman who does not belong to him, it may happen (and this occurs more frequently) that his wives will gather, wait for the guilty woman at the door of the soukala, and give her a good thrashing when she comes out. The husband cannot say anything to them. He himself is protected, so to speak, by his status as a husband and left outside the argument, but revenge is taken on his unlucky accomplice, and while nothing is said to him, he can do nothing to protect her.

58% Divorce. —Divorce occurs in Yatenga more frequently than among the Bambara for reasons which were explained above. Here are the

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracelets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

[839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

[837]

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

586 578 602 [171]

586 As for the other causes of divorce, they occur very rarely, more rarely than the above.

Formalities of divorce. —"There are none," says Vadier. "The husband informs the head of his family and his wife's father of the decision he has taken. Likewise, the wife tells her father and the head of her family.

"If the divorce is contested and things do not work out amicably, the naba intervenes and remains the supreme judge."

Consequences of divorce. —1. Concerning property. "Each spouse," says Vadier, "keeps his or her own property." We have seen in the preceding paragraphs what happened in each case to the gifts given to the wife by her husband.

"As concerns the gifts given by the husband to the girl's family head or mother, there is no possibility of their return under any circumstances.

"2. Concerning the spouses. The spouses are completely freed by the divorce. They no longer have any obligations toward each other. /249/

"They may later marry each other again.

"3. Concerning the children. An important principle settles this question. The children belong to their father and consequently must remain with him.

"Small children accompany the mother, but they must return and live with their father when they reach the age of three (for boys) or six or seven (for girls).

"The divorced woman cannot return to her husband's hut to see her children. She may, however, go to the home of the head of her husband's family where her children may meet her with her husband's permission. The naba can override the father's authorization.

"With paternal consent, the children may go and see their mother at her home."

As Vadier has stated, an important principle governs the consequences of divorce as far as the children are concerned. As among most Sudanese populations, they revert to the father. He married in order to have children. The wife may go away and escape her basic function as generatrix for the husband, as generatrix for the husband's benefit, but the children remain with him. This matter is very important and deserves to be duly noted.

152 Psychology of the women. The woman as lover and as mother. — Mossi women love their children better than their husband. As for

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are
833 excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of
577 European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid
[548] than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.

000 16. Circumcision.
17. Excision.
18. After the circumcision.
19. Emancipation and coming of age.
20. Guardianship.
21. Adoption.
22. Interdiction.

Let us begin with filiation.

848 Filiation. —"The Mossi," says Vadier, "distinguish three types of filiation: (1) legitimate filiation; (2) natural filiation; and (3) filiation from incest.

As for filiation from adultery, it is regarded exactly in the same manner as natural filiation.

[843] The period of gestation is believed to be from seven to twelve months. A child conceived outside this lapse of time is regarded as a natural child. Moreover, a woman need only tell her husband that the child she is carrying in her womb is not his and he will disown it.

When the illegitimate child or one born of adultery reaches the age of three or six (depending on its sex), it is entrusted to its natural father. In spite of this separation, the child retains its rights of inheritance from its mother.

848 Filiation from incest does not exist, or rather there is not enough
847 time for obligations and rights to be created. Indeed, according to a barbarous custom, the child born of incest is put to death immediately after birth by the women who assisted with the delivery.

835 Incest rules apply between kin of any degree in the ascending and descending lines: sister and brother, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and all their relatives in the direct ascending and descending lines; father-in-law and daughter-in-law; son-in-law and mother-in-law. /251/

684 When incest occurs, the guilty pair are driven from their families and from Yatenga, and the naba confiscates all their property."

843 Theory of birth. —The Mossi believe that when a woman is
115 pregnant, the soul of an ancestor has returned within her. We shall speak of this animistic explanation of birth later under "Religion" /not translated/.

In fact, resemblances between the child and some previously known ancestor are pointed out as often as possible, and it is said that this particular ancestor was reincarnated within the woman.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3,000 cowries if they had a boy or 4,000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the
787 baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit
755 (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a
[431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and
576 knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

854 The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins. —Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

857 868 The girls remain by their mother's side. They fetch water with her, learn how to pound millet, how to cook, etc. When they are eight or nine, they are taught how to spin cotton.

513 882 The boys sleep in their mother's hut until they are circumcised, that is, until they are about thirteen years old. Thereafter, they sleep in a special hut, kombarogo, with all the other circumcised boys of the compound. The girls sleep in their mother's hut until they are married.

561 Little boys are called kondibili kirisé, biribili kirisé, or komkirisé (komkiriga in the singular). Little girls are called kompougouli kirisé or bipougouli kirisé. The older girls are kompougouli beda or bipougouli beda. The older boys or young men (they are considered as such once they are circumcised) are rasamba (rasanga in the singular). Young girls are called pourousada or pougousada (pourousadaba in the plural).

857 575 Education of children among themselves. Societies. —Mossi children form societies among themselves. These are called nam (they are the same as the Bambara ton or flambolo). There is a society for boys and one for girls in the small villages. In the large villages, as in Ouahigouya, for example, these societies are formed by village quarters.

Each society has its chief and its high dignitaries: its Moro Naba who rules over it with his four ministers. The girls also have their Pourousada Moro Naba and four female ministers. These societies are devoted to play, drinking, tom-tom playing, and dancing.

Each member must furnish a certain number of cowries: the chiefs /256/ give 200 or 300; the mere rasamba, 100; the kondibili, 50; the kondibili-kirise, 30. The Moro Naba of the society collects the dues, and he is also the treasurer.

Another source of income for the society derives from work performed for the people of the village, the owners of fields. The boys do not merely go and offer their services. When someone needs a helping hand with his field, he goes to the Moro Naba of the society who places the whole group at his disposal for a fee. Payment is made in millet which the society uses to make dolo for its celebrations.

Another source of income derives from fining members for lapses in their duties to the society. The Moro Naba of the nam fines those who arrive late when called for work on someone's field or those who go on an errand or a short trip without notifying him in advance.

857 575 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

[171] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. —Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

573 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. —Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

593 861 858 The right to discipline a child belongs principally to the father (but also to the heads of work group, compound, and family) or to the mother, depending on the age of the child.

"The mother," says Vadier, "has the right to discipline boys until they are circumcised, girls until they marry. This does not mean that the father cannot intervene during that time to reprimand or chastise one of his children, but that he nearly always leaves it to the mother.

"After the boy's circumcision and the girl's marriage, the right to punish belongs to the father and no longer to the mother."

593 858 672 The duty of surveillance belongs principally to the father, and secondly to the heads of the work group, compound, and family. One of its consequences is financial liability. If a child steals or commits some reprehensible act which may call for compensation, the father is primarily responsible and must indemnify the injured parties, after seizing whatever property the child may own.

593 858 443 Formerly, when a native could not manage to discipline a son or daughter whose behavior was very bad, he would hand the child over to the Moro Naba after consulting the family head and the family council. From that day forward he would give up his paternal authority, and the Moro Naba alone would hold it with broader prerogatives. If the child continued to commit extortion, the Moro Naba had the right to have him put to death. When it was a girl who was handed to the naba, the latter would give the father a woman of his own household in exchange if he happened to be favorably disposed toward him.

Now, since the French occupation, this is no longer done. In such cases, nowadays, the child is simply expelled from the compound and from the household.

858 593 A father could not give his child as security, nor could he pawn him temporarily as a slave.

593 429 858 Paternal authority is relinquished in two cases, actually very infrequent: (1) when the father goes insane; and (2) when he has committed incest.

In such a case, paternal authority passes to his oldest living brother, or, if there is no brother, to the oldest son. This guardian has exactly the same powers over the child as the father had.

858 In case of insanity, the children are required to help their father and mother /258/ and to attend to their needs. In case of incest, they have no obligations toward the guilty party.

593 684 The Moro Naba, after he has been notified by the family council, pronounces the forfeiture of paternal authority. In case of incest, the guilty party was driven out of the territory.

593 Duties of children toward their parents. —The children owe obedience to their father and mother. They also owe them respect.

Their labor obligations are distributed among the fields of the work group, the father's private fields, the mother's small private plots, and their own little plots. Naturally they work most on the large fields belonging to the work group.

304 881 Circumcision. —Circumcision is performed at the age of 13 or 14. It takes place in the month of December, hence during the dry, cool season. At this time the children are not needed to help in the fields, as they are in the winter season. This is also the case in the hot, dry season, but at that time the wounds would heal less quickly. This leaves the dry, cold season, which is excellently suited to the treatment of the circumcised, a time when the children have nothing whatever to do and the grown-ups very little.

304 621 593 881 Circumcision is performed on a certain number of children at the same time. When a small village is involved, all the children in the village are circumcised at once. When a large village is involved, the children in each quarter are circumcised together. The children themselves ask their big brother if they may be circumcised when they feel that they have reached a suitable age for this operation. The big brother decides and says yes or no.

304 326 881 The children also set the exact date for the circumcision and go to the man who has charge of the operation to make the arrangements. In Yatenga, as a rule, he is a blacksmith (at Ouahigouya, for example, from the quarter of the Baloum-Naba). Sometimes, however, non-blacksmiths, either Foulsé or Mossi, perform the operation. When a performer of operations dies, he is replaced by someone who knows how to circumcise, either a brother or a son of the deceased or someone from another family.

304 881 Circumcision is not performed in the evening or at night, as happens among other Blacks of West Africa, but at six o'clock in the morning. A particularly kind man among the people of the quarter or of the village has been chosen by the children who are to be circumcised. He wakes them up on that morning and takes them to the man who is to perform the operation. Big brothers accompany their younger brothers, but the father and mother do not witness the operation and are not even

304 notified, nor are the family heads. The women, girls, and other
881 boys (those who are not to be circumcised) cannot witness the operation, and this is actually forbidden to them. Circumcision is performed in the bush, 500 meters from the village, in the open air by the side of a tree. There is no location determined by custom, however, and a spot is chosen each year at will.

The man who is performing the operation ties the tip of the patient's prepuce with a string /259/, and the boy squats down. A small block of wood is placed under the penis, and the tip of the penis rests upon it. The man places a small iron cleaver on the spot marked by the string, and deals it a sharp, neat blow with a stone, so the blade will
[752] make a clean cut. Naturally, a copious hemorrhage ensues. It is first allowed to take its course for a while, and then the man stanches it by putting dust upon the wound. Each child is circumcised in turn. When the operations are over, the man who was chosen, the nané, leads the circumcised boys to another spot, 500 meters from the village, under a tree. He has the heads of the children's families notified (and they notify in turn the children's parents) that the boys have just been circumcised and beg forgiveness for having done this without telling them. Family heads, fathers, and mothers naturally forgive in accordance with custom. Meanwhile, the boys are taking care of themselves. By tying a string around the body, they lift the penis so its tip will not rub against the thighs. The string holds another cord which lifts the penis in a horizontal position. To maintain it in this position, they also place under the penis a little piece of forked wood, the tip of which rests on the testicles. They do not dress the wounds as yet. This will not be done until three days have passed.

304 Meanwhile, the men of the circumcised boys' compounds build
342 two sheds in Mossi style (low, on forks, with a thick straw roof), one
881 outside the village where the young men are, the other inside the village in front of the compound of the nané. Food for the circumcised boys is provided by their families. Each mother makes sarabou for her son, but the mothers do not bring it themselves, for, being women, they are not permitted to see the newly-circumcised boys. They send the sarabou through some boy who has already been circumcised. In the evening when it is quite dark, around seven o'clock, the nané brings the children to sleep under the shed erected in the village. Before daybreak in the morning they will, like shadows, leave again for the bush.

304 824 752 881 At the end of three days, the nané sends a few circumcised boys of preceding years, rasamba, to look in the bush for bark of the néré, karite, n'pékou, and the n'kouna trees. He has them boiled in a large canari and then allows the water to cool until it is lukewarm. Then he calls the bankonsé (this is the name of the newly circumcised boys in Mossi, bankonka in the singular, bankonsé in the plural) and orders them to wash their penes in this water. At the same time he has the leaves of the kantoboga boiled. This is an aloe-type plant of which we have already spoken /not translated/. When this washing is done, the bankonsé smear their penes with cow butter (karite butter is avoided because it is believed to soften the penis and to make it less virile), and then, after cutting kantoboga leaves into pieces, they wrap them around the member, forming a sort of sheath. These leaves are wrapped with cotton thread so they will stay in place. /260/

From then on, the same procedure is repeated every morning and every evening. The bankonsé undo the bandage, wash with néré or karite water, apply fresh butter and new kantoboga leaves. This is done until the wounds are healed.

Néré water, once prepared, keeps for seven days. The supply of kantoboga leaves is renewed only when there are no more on hand.

304 883 881 The bankonsé do not stir for the first three days. From the third to the tenth day, they begin to take a little exercise. For example, they fetch whatever water they need. At the end of ten days, they walk about in the bush, fetch firewood which they stack in piles, and do the same with straw. In the open country they chase hares, rats, and snakes with sticks, in short, all the small game which is to be found there. When there is water in the vicinity, they fish for frogs and fish. They also pick berries from bushes, etc.

[292] Their clothing consists of a kind of skirt which goes down to their ankles and which is made of old garments torn to shreds, of frayed cotton bands.

In the evening from time to time the bankonsé have tom-tom sessions near the shed where they sleep in the village. The griot /drummers, minstrels/ come and play on their instruments. Since this is done at night, men, women, and children may attend.

304 435 881 The bankonsé are entitled to ransack the bush and to take everything they find: chickens, goats, sheep, cotton, etc. The owners have no right to object, but this applies only to small livestock. The bankonsé have no right to larger animals and horses.

881 304 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his [833] wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them [431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home. [551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. ——Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

881 adorned, they go in a group to greet the mother of each one in turn,
304 but they do not go out into the village like the boys.

In short, among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, circumcision and excision are not characterized by the intervention of any powerful religious society like the komo among the Bambara and among the Mandé in general. Nor do we find here those picturesque details which are so strikingly present among the Malinké of Upper Guinea and even more so among the tribes of Lower Guinea (Soussou /Susu/, Landouman /Landuma/, etc.) (3). Nevertheless, circumcision is

3. On this topic, see André Arcin, La Guinée française /French Guinea/, pp. 438-446, and Noirot, A travers le Foutah-Djallon et le Bambouk /Across the Fouta Djallon and Bambouk/, concerning the Landouman.

important in the lives of the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga, because it transforms the child into a young man.

591 After circumcision. —Following circumcision or excision, only marriage remains. When a girl married, as we have seen above, she leaves her compound and goes to her husband's residence. The young man, however, remains in his own compound. He is given a cabin, a hut, for himself and his bride if there is one available and empty, or a new one is built for him. When he has a child, he builds a hut near his own for the young mother and son, unless he is given another one which is available.

884 Emancipation and coming of age. —One can scarcely speak of emancipation and coming of age among the Mossi. A man comes of age when he marries, but he always remains a minor to some extent vis-à-vis his work group, his compound, and his family. Emancipation /262/ and coming of age are French concepts which have no equivalent among the Mossi in particular and the Sudanese in general. One might acknowledge, however, as does Vadier in his monograph on Yatenga, a sort of coming of age around the age of 17 or 18 for purposes of buying and selling.

429 Guardianship. —When a Mossi dies, his wives and children revert to his oldest brother. If there are many wives and children, they are apportioned among the brothers of the deceased. The head of the family presides over the distribution.

429 If the deceased has no brother or grown son, the family head apportions the children among various members of the family.

The guardian has the same obligations toward his ward and enjoys the same rights over them as did their deceased father. By the same token, the wards have the same duties toward their guardian as they did toward their father.

The child inherits from his guardian just like the latter's legitimate children.

[671] Like the father, the guardian is liable for damages caused by his ward.

591 Adoption. —Adoption occurs in Yatenga.

When two spouses have no progeny (this is quite unusual) or simply fail to have any right away, they sometimes adopt a child. The child must be taken into their family. Adoption does not require any formalities.

The child, adopted at a very young age, is never consulted.

The matter is adjusted between the adoptive father, the child's father, and the family head.

Either a girl or boy may be adopted, but actually boys are adopted for the most part.

From the day of his adoption the child enters the household of his adoptive father and mother as a legitimate child.

Actually, this manner of adoption differs from the French one in that it is limited to the family, to the total family.

In addition to this method of adoption and pertaining to the same category, let us point out a curious custom among the Mossi.

The oldest son, according to custom, must not be brought up by his father. As soon as he leaves his mother's breast or sometimes following circumcision, he is handed over to the /father's/ younger or older brother, who raises him and gives him a wife. Upon the death of his father, however, he comes into the latter's inheritance and thus does not really leave the household to which he was born.

672 Interdiction. —"Only the insane are subject to interdiction," says Vadier.

"When a native is afflicted with insanity, the family head and other members of the family meet to discuss the case of the sick person. If he is recognized as irresponsible, the head of the family has all the inhabitants of the village warned to have no dealings with him. Indeed, according to custom, no one /263/ could be held civilly liable for agreements made by a native afflicted with insanity.

672 "If the insane person still has a father, it is his duty to warn the people of the neighborhood.

"All the deeds made, the debts contracted, and the commercial transactions effected by the insane person are declared void. No third parties may appeal against members of the insane person's family."

000 Now let us deal with the appendages of the family.

We shall divide this section into the following headings.

1. Clients.
2. Domestic servants.
3. Slaves. Their origins.
4. Slaves. Name.
5. Slaves. Kinds of slaves.
6. Serfs.

Let us begin with the clients.

441 1. Clients. The usual clientage involving a household which requests support, protection, food, and shelter from a rich family, in return for which the household will labor for the family and live with it, is not to be found among the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga. It does happen, however, that a young man who desires to acquire quickly a wife, a horse, some property, or an amount of authority which does not usually revert to young men decides to leave his family and his compound to place himself in the service of some chief (Moro Naba, canton chief, village chief, tengasoba, etc.). It is the young men, rasamba, who make such decisions. Once they have won what they sought to obtain, however, they return to their families. When one goes to a tengasoba, he usually expects only a wife from him, and he does not leave until the tengasoba dies. Then, provided with a wife, he returns to his family. Naturally, these "temporary volunteers" preserve all their rights in their respective families.

441 Let us note further that during times of famine some Mossi request
731 work from people of better means. The duration of their work is usually very short, scarcely more than a few days (two or three days, for example).

441 The employee and employer (if these terms may be used here) are in no way bound to each other. The former may leave whenever he wishes, and the latter may dismiss him as he pleases. He must, however, pay for the employee's work days in full. The daily

467 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

356 2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in France and other civilized socieites, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 435 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembése) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrãdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called dapare or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

567 whenever the master had work to give him. He worked for himself the rest of the time, that is to say, one day out of three during the cultivation period and throughout the dry season when he was not "on duty."

He was fed by the master when he worked for him. When he worked for himself, he procured his own food.

The bingo provided his own clothing, except when he was absolutely incapable of doing so. Then he appealed to his master.

The bingo's daughters were given in marriage by the master, who took them for himself or gave them to his sons, to his brothers, etc. In return, the bingo's sons had to be provided with wives by their master and not by their father. In any case, they worked for him, like their father, and could no more be sold than he could, unless they betrayed the master with his wives.

567 428 The bingo could own property since he had time to work for himself. At his death, his inheritance went not to his master but to his oldest son (unless he had an enslaved brother nearby, but I am considering the case of a former yembraogo, bought by the master, given a wife by him, and thus becoming a bingo, and then having children). At the death of his eldest son /266/ the inheritance went to his younger brother, etc. The master came into the inheritance only when there were no heirs.

567 On the other hand, the master could request from his slave whatever he wished, a chicken, a goat, a beef. The slave could not refuse, since everything belonged to the master on principle, the slave being his also.

The bingo could never free himself or be freed by his master. The number of generations which had elapsed made no difference.

The bingo could belong to the head of a family, the head of a compound, the head of a work group, or to a mere household head. They were owned on an individual basis. When a man who owned a bingo or yembraogo owed labor to another man, for example, to the head of his work group, the bingo or yembraogo likewise owed labor to this man and went to work with his master.

567 644 It must be noted that the bingo of the Moro Naba, that is, the "Crown bingo," were in a special position from every point of view. As we shall see later under "Public Administration" /not translated/, they came under the authority of the Rassam Naba or Rassoum Naba, one of the four ministers, who was sometimes called Bingo Naba for

567 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or
644 eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

566 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

423 571 also belong to the group, as we shall see later. The group, however, owns neither slaves nor livestock.

421 571 592 Household property. —As we know, during the rainy or cultivating season, the husband works two days out of three for his work group. The third day is his. On that day he works in his small field, helped by his wife or wives. During the dry season, the husband does not work for the group but for himself alone, except for repair work on the compound huts.

571 592 The household is provided with food by the work group seven months out of twelve and is fed with the produce of its own field for five months.

592 423 The primary possession of the household, therefore, is its private field.

The field belonging to the household of the head of the work group is marked by a special characteristic. Since the head of the group is busy at all times with the communal field, even on the third day, his small plot is cultivated exclusively by his wives (and by his slaves, if he has any). Hence, his food is procured by his wives five months out of twelve. This only applies, however, to the heads of work groups (as well as zaka and family heads who are necessarily heads of work groups also).

423 562 422 Individual property. —Mossi women have tiny cultivated patches which are wholly theirs, which do not belong to the work group or to the household and which they work after five o'clock in the evening whenever possible. This is private property. Clothing, women's jewelry, etc., are also individually owned.

423 The husband and children also own private property. Actually, the better to distinguish between individual and communal property (whether belonging to the household, the work group, the compound, or the family), we shall review below each type of property in turn.

Fields. —The fields belong primarily to the work group. (They belong only exceptionally to the compound, when it is so small that there is only one work group.) In addition to the fields of the work group, there is the household field. Finally, beside the household field, there are the private plots, for example, the little patches of the women and young men.

422 571 Work implements. —These tools (daba, axes, etc.) belong to the work group. To work their small fields (both household and private), men and women use the daba of their work group, but if they damage

422 591 them, they must repair them at their own expense. Those implements which are worn out are replaced by the head of the work group.

Domestic animals. —Chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys, etc., are 422 231 all fully owned on an individual basis and not by the group or even by the household. The animal is owned by the man or woman who bought /269/ it. Nevertheless, all the goats and sheep in a compound are gathered together, they sleep in the same place, and they are led to the bush in a flock by the little boys of the compound. The animals of the total family or of the village, on the other hand, are never gathered together.

Wives. —I need not emphasize that wives are obviously private 562 property. There are no wives owned in common by the village, the family, the compound, or the work group. The wife, however, is in some measure considered to belong to the compound or even to the family in the sense that a man's wives always go to his brother when he dies.

The compound. —We saw earlier what applies here. The compound 423 belongs to the zakasoba, but only as a representative of the zaka, as 592 a manager of the property of this subfamilial group. It does not belong to him as private property, in the Roman sense of jus utendi et abutendi /right of use and abuse/. It belongs, ultimately, to the zaka itself.

If this is so, it is not less true that those habitable portions of the zaka, the cabins or huts, are definitely allocated to specific households which have rights of usufruct over them. Thus, the ownership belongs to the zaka, as represented by its head. The usufruct belongs to the households or individuals.

Finally, we may note, as we did earlier, that a hut built exclusively by a household with its own labor or by a single individual of the zaka may be torn down and destroyed by him since it is household or private property set up on subfamilial property. This case, however, is quite exceptional.

The large cabins or huts for millet belong to the cultivating groups. There are also huts for millet belonging to the household, where the husband stores the harvest from the household field. Finally, the 422 large earthen vases, the jars which stand in the huts, lead us from the compound to the subject of furniture. These jars are made by the women and belong individually to specific women.

Furniture. —The furniture, which we shall study in greater detail under "Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/, is very scanty and crude. It is owned privately.

422 415 Household utensils. —The large earthen slabs set up to crush the grain belong to the compound, but the rectangular granitic stones set into the slabs are owned by individual women, as are the movable pestles used to pound grain on the stones.

422 412 592 571 The wooden mortars and pestles, which are very useful and, besides, are heavy, cumbersome, and difficult to destroy, belong to the compound and sometimes to the head of the work group, in other words, to the group itself. In fact, the head of the work group provides part of these implements when the ones purchased by the zakasoba are insufficient.

422 415 592 As for the canari, the largest, which are like small vats and may be as high as one or one and a half meters, are used to hold the dolo /270/ made by the women. They belong to the compound, and they are bought by the compound head. The ordinary canari (25 to 30 centimeters high and used to fetch water or to cook) belong privately to each woman of the compound. The same applies to gourds. The women often buy their canari or gourds with their husband's cowries, but the object, once bought, belongs to them.

422 Clothing. —Clothes are owned fully on a private basis, no matter what their origin. Thus, the skirt cloth bought by the husband for his wife belongs to her.

Ornaments and jewelry. —These are also owned privately, no matter what their origin. Hence, they belong to each man, each woman, each child.

Weapons. —They are likewise owned privately.

Amulets, charms. —The case is the same as for weapons. If, however, we use the word "charm" in its broadest sense, as any object pertaining to the cult, there are family charms which are owned by the family.

Cowries, metal coins, etc. —These are likewise private property.

421 In short, property belonging to the total family is practically nonexistent among the Mossi of Yatenga. There is subfamilial (compound) property and the property of that economic section of the subfamily which is called a work group. In addition to this communal property, there are household property and strictly private property.

428 Now let us deal with the transmission of property or inheritance.
596 Transmission of the property of the total family. —Since such property does not exist, it is not transmitted, except the family charms. The status of family head, however, is transmitted. When a family head dies, it is the oldest remaining man of the family (sometimes his brother, sometimes his cousin, etc.) who takes command of the family.

428 Transmission of the compound and its property. —When the head of
592 a compound dies, it is the oldest man in the compound (brother, cousin, etc.) who takes command of it. At the same time he takes over the management of the property communally owned by the whole compound.

428 Transmission of the property of the work group. —When the head of
571 a work group dies, it is likewise the oldest man in the group (usually the younger brother of the deceased) who assumes leadership and the management of the group's property (fields, work implements, etc.)

Let us note that in all these transmissions, when there are no longer any men of the same generation, then the sons of all the brothers, cousins, etc., are chosen, beginning with the eldest. That is to say, when one generation is exhausted, the next generation is tapped.

428 Transmission of household property. —When a married Mossi who has /271/ children dies, his eldest brother (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) receives the inheritance. He does not take everything, however. He is expected to share, up to a point, with the other brothers (born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) and with the sons if they are old enough.

The oldest brother takes the huts and the field. The wives, on the other hand, are divided among the brothers and even among the sons if the latter are grown. If the wives are not numerous, the oldest brother does not get any more of them than the other sharers. The livestock is divided among the same people, but this time the largest share goes not to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest, but to the oldest brother born of the same father and mother. The cowries, coins, movable property, and jewelry are divided in the same manner. Weapons are apportioned, but the largest share goes to the brother who is unqualifiedly the oldest. The latter takes the dead man's bow and quiver, while dividing the arrows among the brothers and sons without bypassing himself.

As we can see, sharing does take place and is actually quite a complex matter, since it is sometimes the eldest of all the brothers

428 (whether born of the same father and mother or only of the same father) who benefits, and sometimes the eldest brother among those who were born of the same father and mother, but this sharing is very uneven. The two brothers who are the eldest in the senses just described get considerably more than the other cosharers.

428 571 After the distribution, the men usually remain in the same compound and also in the same work group as before. Upon the death of household heads, however, and especially of heads of work groups, the work groups (which have expanded gradually with new births) alter their constitution and divide. These work groups indeed grow constantly (by the natural process of birth) and also dwindle constantly (by the natural process of death and new divisions). As for the zaka, they are not completely stable either since new ones are established as time goes by in proportion to the growth of population.

428 Let us add a few details on inheritance.

Small male children do inherit, but their share is not handed to them. It is handed to the brother who inherits the mother of these children. When they are grown, their mother's new husband will deliver it to them.

[562] Daughters do not inherit.

Women never inherit. On the other hand people do inherit from them.

Transmission of specifically private property. —A case of this type is the inheritance of a wife. As we have seen earlier, the goods of a deceased woman go to her children, sons or daughters. Boys' things go to the boys, girls' things to the girls. All the boys get something, but the oldest son is very much favored. All the girls get something, but the oldest daughter is very much favored. When there are no children, the woman's inheritance goes to her own family and not to her husband or to her husband's family. /272/

Another case of this type is the death of a boy or young man. If he has a brother, the latter inherits. If he has no brother, his father does. Sometimes the father entrusts the goods to the mother to be given to a future child.

In the event of a young girl's death, her sister inherits. If she has no sister, the mother inherits. If the mother died first, her family inherits (that is, the mother's younger sister).

Finally, another case in point is the death of a Mossi bachelor. His brother who inherits or, lacking one, his brother's son.

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.

Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier, 848 "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he 431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

[837] The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.